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Disciplinary Language in All Classrooms

In the classroom, not all of the students are going to be perfectly well-behaved; there will be some students who do what they are told at all times, while others do quite the opposite. Due to this, teachers develop different methods of linguistic discipline they apply onto their students, whether it be stern or gentle language usage. Since we are both majoring in some branch of education at Central Michigan University, – Sam is elementary, while Camiel is secondary – we wanted to explore the different methods of disciplinary language amongst the different levels of education. In a matter of weeks, we took our plan into action. From preschool to high school, different tones and types of diction are implemented on the different grade levels. We wanted to measure how effective each level is and how the different levels both compare and contrast from one another. To gain a better understanding of the topic, we studied four areas of the education field: preschool, elementary, middle, and high schools. Sam studied an elementary school and a high school, Camiel focused on a middle school, as well as a high school, and together we observed at the preschool on CMU’s campus. **(put this in the interview subsection of paper:** Through these observations, we noticed the different methods of linguistic discipline and how each grade level compared and contrasted from one another.) Additionally, we took our study further and interviewed current service teachers to learn their methods of linguistic discipline from their experiences in the classroom. (**put this in the interview subsection of paper:** it is one thing to just sit back and observe a teacher at work, but it is a completely different learning experience to talk one on one with a teacher to get some information about why they discipline how they discipline.) Finally, we wrapped up our research by assessing a survey to two different elementary, middle, and high schools. (**put this in the survey subsection of paper:** through a survey, we could receive teachers’ honest feedbacks about how they linguistically discipline their students while keeping their identities anonymous.) Through these findings, we had hoped to discover the different types of linguistic discipline, and to measure its effectiveness across the various grade levels. (**put this in the primary research section:** An important variable pertaining to this study is the grade level of the student.)

SECONDARY RESEARCH:

The article “Want Positive Behavior? Use Positive Language” describes how teachers must act as examples for their students to follow. This particular article was describing behavior in a classroom at a preschool. In Holly Smith’s article, “Common Discipline Problems Of Elementary School Children And How to Deal With Them,” she gives specific examples and gives parents and teachers guides so that they can learn how to correct the problems. Chastity Pratt discusses the importance of teaching self-discipline in the classroom in her article, “Middle School Discipline That Works.”  The article “Fair and Effective Discipline for All Students: Best Practice Strategies for Educators” also lists many helpful tips on good discipline methods. “Maintaining Classroom Discipline; Promoting Good Methods of Classroom Discipline” is another source that gives helpful tips for teachers. One source we found is a Discipline Policy for Washington Preparatory High School, which shows exactly what this school does about disciplining their students. **Organize these into categories on how they relate to one another and add A LOT more detail.**

PRIMARY RESEARCH:

We sent out a survey to our elementary, middle, and high schools asking questions 5 questions.  For the first question, we asked them about their disciplinary methods they use in the classroom and the results showed that 46.15% of teachers follow the handbook with minor alterations using their own rules when necessary, 25.64% follow their own rules with minor alterations using the handbook when necessary, 23.08% come up with their own methods that work better for themselves and their students, and lastly 5.13% strictly follow the school handbook for guidance on discipline. The second question was asking what tone of voice they would use when disciplining a student in the order of gentle, relaxed, neutral, fair, and stern. No one said their voice would be gentle; most of them put that they would be fair. The last three questions gave an example of how to discipline three different types of students; normally misbehaved student, a normally well-behaved student, and a student who has special needs. The answer that was most commonly used was negative reinforcement. **Add in graphs from our survey.**

When observing at the middle school, I noticed similar language choices amongst the different teachers. The first class I observed was 6th grade math and English. This teacher was very calm and relaxed when talking to the students. If they answered incorrectly, he would patiently use words to hint to them that they were wrong. For example, before I came to observe, the students were learning about area of objects (using units squared). The day I observed is the day they started to learn about volume (using units cubed). Some of the students would accidently answer the question saying, “units squared” instead of saying units cubed, so he would repeat what they said until they realized that they answered the problem incorrectly. Another teacher joined the previously mentioned teacher as an aid to the class and I noticed much different language from her than from him. Students would answer incorrectly, and she would immediately say with an exasperated look on her face, “No, that’s completely wrong! How in the world did you get that answer?!” The students after that would seem to shut down and not want to work; they had a look of defeat on their faces.

**Add preschool observations**

**Add Sam’s elementary and high school observations**

**Add Sam’s interviews**

ARGUMENT:

In short, people want teachers to be consistent with their disciplinary methods in the classroom, or else it might show some sort of favoritism. Though this would be ideal, it is almost impossible to accomplish. Because some students require different types or levels of discipline in order to behave when compared to other students, one universal method is very unlikely to pursue. (**briefly restate about what we saw in the classroom, what we learned through ms. carter’s story in her interview, and how the teachers’ survey results were not all one answer)**

CONCLUSION:

Overall, we have learned a lot with our thorough research; we could see how the various grade levels differed when it came to disciplining their students. It was also really informative to see how disciplinary language was used outside of the traditional classroom; by observing in a band room setting, I could see how the disciplinary language differed, as well as compared, to the disciplinary language in a traditional classroom. By interviewing current service teachers, we were able to learn more about teachers’ thought processes or personal stories that taught us why teachers use the words they do to discipline their students. Additionally, surveying teachers was definitely an advantageous aspect of this project; we were able to find out what teachers truly do in the classroom without the fear of being judged. Receiving 39 responses indubitably showed us some clear comparisons and differences. Reading countless articles informed us how other teachers choose their words and tone of voice to discipline their students. Finally, due to the variations of student attitudes and behaviors, it is very difficult and nearly impossible to be able to implement the same diction to every student, because not all students are alike. Not only were these findings beneficial to our readers, but it was also beneficial to us as future educators; this taught us a lot about how teachers manipulate language in order to keep their students focused, on task, and decrease unwanted behaviors. We were very thankful to be able to be a part of such a successful research project, and we were fortunate to revolve it around our passions: education. Without education, other jobs would not be possible, so it is imperative that students receive the best education possible – and that begins with shaping proper behavior in the classroom.